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Shakespeare

- King Lear

- 1892.

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KING LEAR

A TRAGEDY IN FIVE ACTS,

BY

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE,

AS ARRANGED FOR THE STAGE

BY

HENRY IRVING,

AND PRESENTED AT

THE LYCEUM THEATRE,

On NOVEMBER 10th, 1892.



Printed by
"NASSAU STEAM PRESS" LTD.

1892.

PRICE ONE SHILLING.





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PREFACE.

THIS version of Shakespeare's tragedy, *King Lear*, has been made for practical use on the stage, the play being necessarily reduced to reasonable length to suit the exigencies of the present time. In the curtailment, all superfluous horrors have been omitted.

As the period of *King Lear* is fabulous, I have chosen, at the suggestion of Mr. Ford Madox Brown (who has kindly designed three scenes in the First and Second Acts), a time shortly after the departure of the Romans, when the Britons would naturally inhabit the houses left vacant.

HENRY IRVING.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

LEAR ...	(<i>King of Britain</i>)	...	Mr. IRVING.
King of France	...	...	Mr. PERCIVAL.
Duke of Burgundy	...	...	Mr. BOND.
Duke of Cornwall	...	...	Mr. HAGUE.
Duke of Albany	...	...	Mr. TYARS.
Earl of Kent	...	...	Mr. HOLLOWAY.
Earl of Gloster	...	...	Mr. ALFRED BISHOP.
EDGAR ...	(<i>son to Gloster</i>)	...	Mr. WILLIAM TERRISS.
EDMUND ...	(<i>bastard son to Gloster</i>)	...	Mr. FRANK COOPER.
CURAN	... (<i>a courtier</i>)	...	Mr. HARVEY.
Old Man	... (<i>tenant to Gloster</i>)	...	Mr. HOWE.
Fool	...	...	Mr. HAVILAND.
OSWALD	...(<i>steward to Goneril</i>)...	...	Mr. GORDON CRAIG.
Physician	...	...	Mr. LACY.
An Officer	...	...	Mr. LORRISS.
A Gentleman	...	...	Mr. IAN ROBERTSON.
A Messenger	...	...	Mr. POWELL.
A Herald	...	...	Mr. BELMORE.
A Knight	...	...	Mr. TABB.
GONERIL, wife to Albany	} <i>daughters</i> <i>to Lear</i>	...	Miss ADA DYAS.
REGAN, wife to Cornwall		...	Miss MAUD MILTON.
CORDELIA		...	and Miss ELLEN TERRY.

Knights attending on LEAR, Officers, Messengers, Soldiers, and Attendants.

SYNOPSIS OF SCENERY.

ACT I.

SCENE 1.—King Lear's Palace	...	...	...	<i>J. Harker.</i>
SCENE 2.—Earl of Gloster's Castle	...	...	...	<i>J. Harker.</i>
SCENE 3.—Duke of Albany's Castle	...	...	...	<i>J. Harker.</i>

ACT II.

SCENE 1.—Court within Gloster's Castle	...	<i>J. Harker.</i>
SCENE 2.—Open Country	...	<i>Hawes Craven.</i>
SCENE 3.—Court within Gloster's Castle	...	<i>J. Harker.</i>

ACT III.

SCENE 1.—A Heath	...	<i>Hawes Craven.</i>
SCENE 2.—Another part of the Heath	...	<i>Hawes Craven.</i>
SCENE 3.—Farm-house	...	<i>Hawes Craven.</i>

ACT IV.

SCENE 1.—Albany's Castle	...	<i>J. Harker.</i>
SCENE 2.—Open Country	...	<i>Hawes Craven.</i>
SCENE 3.—Country near Dover	...	<i>Hawes Craven.</i>
SCENE 4.—French Camp	...	<i>Hawes Craven.</i>
SCENE 5.—Tent in the French Camp	...	<i>Hawes Craven.</i>

ACT V.

SCENE 1.—British Camp near Dover	...	<i>Hawes Craven.</i>
SCENE 2.—The same	...	<i>Hawes Craven.</i>

SCENE.—BRITAIN.



KING LEAR.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—King LEAR's *Palace*.

Enter KENT, GLOSTER, and EDMUND.

Kent.



thought the king had more affected the Duke of Albany than Cornwall.

Glo. It did always seem so to us: but now, in the division of the kingdom, it appears not which of the dukes he values most.

Kent. Is not this your son, my lord?

Glo. His breeding, sir, hath been at my charge: I have so often blush'd to acknowledge him, that now I am braz'd to it. But I have, sir, a son by order of law, some year older than this, who is yet no dearer in my account. Do you know this noble gentleman, Edmund?

Edm. No, my lord.

Glo. My lord of Kent : remember him hereafter as my honourable friend.

Edm. My services to your lordship.

Kent. I must love you, and sue to know you better.

Edm. Sir, I shall study deserving. [*Trumpets within.*] The king is coming.

Enter LEAR, CORNWALL, ALBANY, GONERIL, REGAN, CORDELIA, Fool, *and* Attendants.

Lear. Attend the Lords of France and Burgundy, Gloster.

Glo. I shall, my liege.

[*Exeunt* GLOSTER *and* EDMUND.]

Lear. Meantime we shall express our darker purpose —

Give me the map there.—Know that we've divided
In three our kingdom : and 'tis our fast intent
To shake all cares and business from our age ;
Conferring them on younger strengths, while we
Unburden'd crawl toward death.—Our son of
Cornwall,

And you, our no less loving son of Albany,
We have this hour a constant will to publish
Our daughters' several dowers, that future strife
May be prevented now. Tell me, my daughters,—
Since now we will divest us both of rule,
Interest of territory, cares of state,—
Which of you shall we say doth love us most ?
That we our largest bounty may extend
Where nature doth with merit challenge.—Goneril,
Our eldest-born, speak first.

Gon. Sir,

I love you more than words can wield the matter ;
Dearer than eyesight, space, and liberty ;
As much as child e'er lov'd, or father found ;

A love that makes breath poor, and speech unable ;
Beyond all manner of so much I love you.

Cor. [*aside*] What shall Cordelia do ? Love, and
be silent.

Lear. Of all these bounds, even from this line to this,
With shadowy forests and with champions rich'd,
With plenteous rivers and wide-skirted meads,
We make thee lady : to thine and Albany's issue
Be this perpetual.—What says our second daughter,
Our dearest Regan, wife to Cornwall ? Speak.

Reg. Sir,
I'm made of that self metal as my sister,
And prize me at her worth. In my true heart
I find she names my very deed of love ;
Only she comes too short.

Cor. [*aside*] Then poor Cordelia !
And yet not so ; since, I am sure, my love's
More richer than my tongue.

Lear. To thee and thine hereditary ever
Remain this ample third of our fair kingdom ;
No less in space, validity, and pleasure,
Than that conferr'd on Goneril.—Now, our joy,
Although our last, not least, to whose young love
The vines of France and milk of Burgundy
Strive to be interest'd ; what can you say to draw
A third more opulent than your sisters ? Speak.

Cor. Nothing, my lord.

Lear. Nothing !

Cor. Nothing.

Lear. Nothing will come of nothing : speak again.

Cor. Unhappy that I am, I cannot heave
My heart into my mouth : I love your Majesty
According to my bond ; nor more nor less.

Lear. How, how, Cordelia ! mend your speech a
little,
Lest it may mar your fortunes.

Cor. Good my lord,
You have begot me, bred me, lov'd me ; I
Return those duties back as are right fit,

Obey you, love you, and most honour you.
 Why have my sisters husbands, if they say
 They love you all? Haply, when I shall wed,
 That lord whose hand must take my plight, shall carry
 Half my love with him, half my care and duty:
 Sure, I shall never marry like my sisters,
 To love my father all.

Lear. But goes thy heart with this?

Cor. Ay, good my lord.

Lear. So young, and so untender?

Cor. So young, my lord, and true.

Lear. Let it be so,—thy truth, then, be thy dow'r:
 For, by the sacred radiance of the sun,
 Here I disclaim all my paternal care,
 And as a stranger to my heart and me
 Hold thee, from this, for ever.

Kent. Good my liege,—

Lear. Peace, Kent!

Come not between the dragon and his wrath.—
 I lov'd her most, and thought to set my rest
 On her kind nursery.—Hence, and avoid my sight!—
 So be my grave my peace, as here I give
 Her fathers heart from her!—Call France;—who
 stirs?

Call Burgundy.—[*Exit a Knight.*]—Cornwall and
 Albany,

With my two daughters' dow'rs digest this third:
 Let pride, which she calls plainness, marry her.
 I do invest you jointly with my power,
 Pre-eminence, and all the large effects
 That troop with majesty.—Ourself, by monthly
 course,

With reservation of an hundred knights,
 By you to be sustain'd, shall our abode
 Make with you by due turns. Only we still retain
 The name, and all th' additions to a king
 The sway,
 Revènuè, execution of the rest,

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[Giving the Crown to ALBANY.

[Seizing his sword.

On thine allegiance hear me !—
 Since thou hast sought to make us break our vow,—
 Which we durst never yet,—and with strain'd pride
 To come between our sentence and our pow'r,—
 Which nor our nature nor our place can bear,—
 Our potency made good, take thy reward.
 Five days we do allot thee, for provision
 To shield thee from diseases of the world ;
 And, on the sixth, to turn thy hated back
 Upon our kingdom : if, on the tenth day following,
 Thy banish'd trunk be found in our dominions,

The moment is thy death. Away! by Jupiter,
This shall not be revok'd.

Kent. Fare thee well, king.

[*To CORDELIA.*] The gods to their dear shelter take
thee, maid!—

[*To REGAN and GONERIL.*] And your large speeches
may your deeds approve.

Thus Kent, O princes, bids you all adieu;
He'll shape his old course in a country new. [*Exit.*]

Flourish. *Re-enter GLOSTER and EDMUND, with
FRANCE, BURGUNDY, and Attendants.*

Glo. Here's France and Burgundy, my noble lord.

Lear. My Lord of Burgundy,
We first address towards you, who, with this king
Hath rivall'd for our daughter: what, in the least,
Will you require in present dow'r with her,
Or cease your quest of love?

Bur. Most royal majesty,
I crave no more than hath your highness offer'd,
Nor will you tender less.

Lear. Right noble Burgundy,
When she was dear to us, we did hold her so;
But now her price is fall'n. Sir, there she stands:
Dower'd with our curse, and stranger'd with our oath,
Take her, or leave her?

Bur. Pardon me, royal sir;
Election makes not up on such conditions.

Lear. Then leave her, sir; for, by the pow'r that
made me,

I tell you all her wealth.—[*To FRANCE.*] For you,
great king,

I would not from your love make such a stray,
To match you where I hate; therefore beseech you
T' avert your liking a more worthier way
Than on a wretch whom nature is asham'd
Almost t' acknowledge hers.

ACT I. SCENE I.

15

France. This is most strange !

Cor. I yet beseech your Majesty,—make known,
It is no vicious blot, nor stain of foulness,
No unchaste action, or dishonour'd step,
That hath depriv'd me of your grace and favour ;
But even for want of that for which I'm richer,—
A still-soliciting eye, and such a tongue
As I am glad I have not, though not to have it
Hath lost me in your liking.

Lear. Better thou
Hadst not been born than not t' have pleas'd me
better.

France. Is it but this? a tardiness in nature
Which often leaves the history unspoke
That it intends to do? My Lord of Burgundy,
What say you to the lady? Will you have her?
She is herself a dowry.

Bur. Royal King,
Give but that portion which yourself propose,
And here I take Cordelia by the hand,
Duchess of Burgundy.

Lear. I have sworn; I am firm.

Bur. I am sorry, then, you have so lost a father,
That you must lose a husband.

Cor. Peace be with Burgundy.
Since that respects of fortune are his love,
I shall not be his wife.

France. Fairest Cordelia, thou art most rich,
being poor ;
Most choice, forsaken ; and most lov'd, despis'd !
Thee and thy virtues here I seize upon.
Thy dow'rless daughter, king, thrown to my chance,
Is queen of us, of ours, and our fair France :
Not all the dukes of wat'rish Burgundy
Can buy this unpriz'd precious maid of me.

Lear. Thou hast her, France: let her be thine ;
for we
Have no such daughter, nor shall ever see

That face of hers again :— Therefore be gone
Without our grace, our love, our benison.

[*Flourish. Exeunt* LEAR, BURGUNDY,
CORNWALL, ALBANY, GLOSTER,
EDMUND, *and* Attendants.

France. Bid farewell to your sisters.

Cor. Ye jewels of our father, with wash'd eyes
Cordelia leaves you : I know you what you are ;
And, like a sister, am most loathe to call
Your faults as they are nam'd. Love well our father :
To your professèd bosoms I commit him :
But yet, alas, stood I within his grace,
I would prefer him to a better place.
So, farewell to you both.

Reg. Prescribe not us our duties.

Gon. Let your study
Be to content your lord, who hath receiv'd you
At fortune's alms.

Cor. Time shall unfold what plaited cunning
hides :
Who cover faults, at last them shame derides.
Well may you prosper.

France. Come, my fair Cordelia.

[*Exeunt* FRANCE *and* CORDELIA.

Gon. I think our father will hence to-night.

Reg. That's most certain, and with you ; next
month with us.

Gon. You see how full of changes his age is ; he
always lov'd our sister most ; and with what poor
judgment he hath now cast her off appears too
grossly.

Reg. Such unconstant starts are we like to have
from him as this of Kent's banishment.

Gon. Pray you, let us hit together : we must do
something, and i' the heat.

SCENE II. *The Earl of GLOSTER's Castle.*

Enter EDMUND, with a letter.

Edmund.

THOU, nature, art my goddess ; to thy law
My services are bound. Wherefore should I
Stand in the plague of custom, and permit
The curiosity of nations to deprive me,
For that I am some twelve or fourteen moonshines
Lag of a brother ? Why bastard ? Wherefore base ?
When my dimensions are as well compact,
My mind as gen'rous, and my shape as true,
As honest madam's issue ?
Legitimate Edgar, I must have your land :
Our father's love is to the bastard Edmund
As to the legitimate : fine word,—legitimate
Well, my legitimate, if this letter speed,
And my invention thrive, Edmund the base,
Shall top the legitimate. I grow ; I prosper !

Enter GLOSTER.

Glo. Kent banish'd thus ! and France in choler
parted !

And the king gone to-night !

Edmund, how now ! what news ?

Edm. So please your lordship, none.

[Hiding the letter.]

Glo. What paper were you reading ?

Edm. Nothing, my lord.

Glo. No ? What needed, then, that terrible dis-
patch of it into your pocket ? Let's see.

Edm. I beseech you, sir, pardon me : it is a letter
from my brother, that I have not all o'er-read ; and
for so much as I have perus'd, I find it not fit for
your o'er-looking.

Glo. Give me the letter, sir.

Edm. I hope, for my brother's justification, he wrote this but as an essay or taste of my virtue.

Glo. [*reads*] "*This policy and reverence of age makes the world bitter to the best of our times; keeps our fortunes from us till our oldness cannot relish them. Come to me, that of this I may speak more. If our father would sleep till I wak'd him, you should enjoy half his revèue for ever, and live the belov'd of your brother,*"

Edgar."

"Sleep till I wak'd him,—you should enjoy half his revèue,"—My son Edgar! When came this to you? who brought it?

Edm. It was not brought me, my lord,—there's the cunning of it; I found it thrown in at the case-ment of my closet.

Glo. O villain, villain! Abhorred villain! Go, sirrah, seek him; I'll apprehend him:—abominable villain!

Edm. If your honour judge it meet, I will place you where you shall hear us confer of this, and that without any further delay than this very evening.

Glo. He cannot be such a monster—

Edm. Nor is not, sure.

Glo. To his father, that so tenderly and entirely loves him.—Heaven and earth!—Edmund seek him out. These late eclipses in the sun and moon portend no good to us. Find out this villain, Edmund; it shall lose thee nothing. [*Exit.*]

Edm. This is the excellent foppery of the world, that, when we are sick in fortune,—often the surfeit of our own behaviour,—we make guilty of our disasters the sun, the moon, and the stars. Tut, I should have been that I am, had the maidenliest star in the firmament twinkled on my birth.—Edgar!—pat he comes, like the catastrophe of the old comedy.

Enter EDGAR.

Edg. How now, brother Edmund! what serious contemplation are you in?

Edm. I am thinking, brother, of a prediction I read this other day, what should follow these eclipses. When saw you my father last?

Edg. The night gone by.

Edm. Spake you with him?

Edg. Ay, two hours together.

Edm. Found you no displeasure in him by word nor countenance?

Edg. None at all.

Edm. Bethink yourself wherein you may have offended him: and at my entreaty forbear his presence till some little time hath qualified the heat of his displeasure.

Edg. Some villain hath done me wrong.

Edm. That's my fear. Retire with me to my lodging, from whence I will fitly bring you to hear my lord speak: pray ye, go; there's my key:—if you do stir abroad, go arm'd.

Edg. Arm'd, brother!

Edm. Brother, I advise you to the best; I am no honest man if there be any good meaning toward you: pray you, away.

Edg. Shall I hear from you anon?

Edm. I do serve you in this business.

[Exit EDGAR.]

A credulous father! and a brother noble,
Whose nature is so far from doing harms,
That he suspects none; on whose foolish honesty
My practices ride easy!—I see the business.—
Let me, if not by birth, have lands by wit:
All with me's meet that I can fashion fit. *[Exit,*

SCENE 3.—*Before the Duke of ALBANY's Castle.**Enter GONERIL and OSWALD.**Goneril.*

TID my father strike my gentleman for chiding
of his fool?

Osw. Ay, madam.

Gon. By day and night, he wrongs me ;
I'll not endure it :

His knights grow riotous, and himself upbraids us
On every trifle.—When he returns from hunting,
I will not speak with him ; say I am sick.

*[Horns within.]**Osw.* He's coming, madam ; I hear him.

Gon. Put on what weary negligence you please,
You and your fellows ; I'd have it come to question.
Idle old man. Remember what I've said.

Osw. Very well, madam.*[Exeunt.]**Enter KENT, disguised.*

Kent. Now, banish'd Kent,
If thou canst serve where thou dost stand condem'nd,
(So may it come !) thy master, whom thou lov'st,
Shall find thee full of labours.

*[Horns within.]**Enter LEAR, Knights, and Attendants.*

Lear. Let me not stay a jot for dinner ; go get it
ready.

[Exit a Knight.]

How now ! what art thou ?

Kent. A man, sir.

Lear. What dost thou profess ? What wouldst
thou with us ?

Kent. I do profess to be no less than I seem ; to serve him truly that will put me in trust ; to love him that is honest ; to converse with him that is wise, and says little ; to fear judgment ; to fight when I cannot choose ; and to eat no fish.

Lear. What art thou ?

Kent. A very honest-hearted fellow, and as poor as the king.

Lear. If thou be as poor for a subject, as he is for a king, thou art poor enough. What wouldst thou ?

Kent. Service.

Lear. Whom wouldst thou serve ?

Kent. You.

Lear. Dost thou know me, fellow ?

Kent. No, sir ; but you have that in your countenance which I would fain call master.

Lear. What's that ?

Kent. Authority.

Lear. What services canst thou do ?

Kent. I can keep honest counsel, ride, run, mar a curious tale in telling it, and deliver a plain message bluntly.

Lear. How old art thou ?

Kent. Not so young, sir, to love a woman for singing, nor so old to dote on her for any thing : I have years on my back forty-eight.

Lear. Follow me ; thou shalt serve me. If I like thee no worse after dinner, I will not part from thee yet. Dinner, ho, dinner !—Where's my knave ? my fool ?—Go you, and call my fool hither.

[*Exit a Knight.*]

Enter OSWALD.

You, you, sirrah, where's my daughter ?

Osw. So please you,—

[*Exit.*]

Lear. What says the fellow there ? Call the clotpoll back. [*Exit KENT and a Knight.*]—Where's my fool, ho ?—I think the world's asleep

Re-enter Knight.

How now ! where's that mongrel ?

Knight. He says, my lord, your daughter is not well.

Lear. Why came not the slave back to me when I call'd him ?

Knight. Sir, he answer'd me in the roundest manner, he would not.

Lear. He would not !

Knight. My lord, I know not what the matter is ; but, to my judgment, your highness is not entertain'd with that ceremonious affection as you were wont.

Lear. Ha ! sayest thou so ? Thou but rememb'erst me of mine own conception : I have perceiv'd a most faint neglect of late ; which I have rather blam'd as mine own jealous curiosity than as a very pretence and purpose of unkindness : I will look further into't.—But where's my fool ? I have not seen him this two days.

Knight. Since my young lady's going to France, sir, the fool hath much pined away.

Lear. No more of that ; I have noted it well.—Go you, and tell my daughter I would speak with her.
[*Exit a Knight.*—Go you, call hither my fool.

[*Exit a Knight.*

Re-enter KENT with OSWALD.

O, you sir, you, come you hither, sir : who am I, sir ?

Osw. My lady's father.

Lear. “My lady's father” ! my lord's knave : you dog ! you slave ! you cur !

Osw. I am none of these, my lord.

Lear. Do you bandy looks with me, you rascal ?

[*Striking him.*

Osw. I'll not be struck, my lord.

Kent. Nor tripp'd neither, you base football player. [*Tripping up his heels.*]

Lear. I thank thee, fellow; thou serv'st me, and I'll love thee.

Kent. Come, sir, arise, away! I'll teach you differences: away, away! [*Pushes OSWALD out.*]

Lear. Now, my friendly knave, I thank thee: there's earnest of thy service. [*Giving KENT money.*]

Enter Fool.

Fool. Let me hire him too:—here's my coxcomb. [*Offering KENT his cap.*]

Lear. How now, my pretty knave! how dost thou?

Fool. Sirrah, you were best take my coxcomb.

Kent. Why, fool?

Fool. Why, for taking one's part that's out of favour: there, take my coxcomb. Why, this fellow has banish'd two on's daughters, and did the third a blessing against his will; if thou follow him, thou must needs wear my coxcomb. Sirrah, I'll teach thee a speech.

Lear. Do.

Fool. Mark it, nuncle:

*Have more than thou showest,
Speak less than thou knowest,
Lend less than thou owest,
Ride more than thou goest,
Learn more than thou trowest,
Set less than thou throwest;
And thou shalt have more
Than two tens to a score.*

Kent. This is nothing, fool.

Fool. Then 'tis like the breath of an unfee'd lawyer ;
you gave me nothing for 't. I would not be thee,
nuncle : thou hast pared thy wit o' both sides, and
left nothing i' th' middle. Here comes one o' the
parings.

Enter GONERIL.

Lear. How now, daughter ! what makes that
frontlet on ? Methinks you are too much of late
i' the frown.

Gon. Not only, sir, this your all-licens'd fool,
But other of your insolent retinue
Do hourly carp and quarrel ; breaking forth
In rank and not-to-be-endurèd riots.

Sir,
I had thought, by making this well-known unto you,
T' have found a safe redress ; but now grow fearful,
That you protect this course, and put it on
By your allowance.

Fool. For, you trow, nuncle,

*The hedge-sparrow fed the cuckoo so long,
That it had its head bit off by its young.*

So out went the candle, and we were left darkling.

Lear. Are you our daughter ?

Gon. I would you would make use of your good
wisdom,

Whereof I know you're fraught ; and put away
These dispositions, that of late transform you
From what you rightly are.

Fool. May not an ass know when the cart draws
the horse ?—

Whoop, fug ! I love thee.

Lear. Doth any here know me?—Why, this is not

Lear:

Doth Lear walk thus? speak thus? Where are his eyes?

Who is it that can tell me who I am?—

Fool. Lear's shadow.—

Lear. I would learn that; for by the marks of sovereignty, knowledge and reason, I should be false persuaded I had daughters. Your name, fair gentlewoman?

Gon. This admiration, sir, is much o' the savour Of other your new pranks. I do beseech you To understand my purposes aright: As you are old and rev'rend, you should be wise. Here do you keep a hundred knights and squires; Men so disorder'd, so debauch'd, and bold, That this our court, infected with their manners, Shows like a riotous inn.

Be, then, desir'd

By her, that else will take the thing she begs,
A little to disquantity your train;
And the remainder, that shall depend,
To be such men as may besort your age,
Which know themselves and you.

Lear. Darkness and devils!—

Saddle my horses; call my train together.—

Degenerate bastard! I'll not trouble thee:

Yet have I left a daughter.

Woe, that too late repents,— [Enter ALBANY.

O, sir, are you come?

Is it your will? Speak, sir.—Prepare my horses.—

Ingratitude, thou marble-hearted fiend,

More hideous when thou show'st thee in a child

Than the sea-monster!

Alb. Pray, sir, be patient.

Lear. [To GONERIL.] Detested kite! thou liest:
My train are men of choice and rarest parts,

That all particulars of duty know,
 And in the most exact regard support
 The worships of their name.—O most small fault,
 How ugly didst thou in Cordelia show,
 Which like an engine, wrench'd my frame of nature
 From the fix'd place; drew from my heart all love,
 And added to the gall. O Lear, Lear, Lear!
 Beat at this gate, that let thy folly in,

[*Striking his head.*]

And thy dear judgment out!—Go, go, my people.

Alb. Now, gods that we adore, whereof comes this?

Lear. I'll tell thee,—[*To GONERIL.*] Life and death! I am asham'd

That thou hast power to shake my manhood thus;
 That these hot tears, which break from me perforce,
 Should make thee worth them.—Blasts and fogs
 upon thee!

Th' untented woundings of a father's curse
 Pierce every sense about thee!—Old fond eyes,
 Beweep this cause again, I'll pluck ye out,
 And cast you, with the waters that you lose,
 To temper clay.—Ha, is it come to this?
 Let it be so:—I have another daughter,
 Who, I am sure, is kind and comfortable:
 When she shall hear this of thee, with her nails
 She'll flay thy wolfish visage. Thou shalt find
 That I'll resume the shape which thou dost think
 I have cast off for ever; thou shalt, I warrant thee.

Gon. Do you mark that?

Alb. My lord, I'm guiltless, as I'm ignorant
 Of what hath mov'd you.

Lear. It may be so, my lord.—
 Hear, nature, hear; dear goddess, hear!
 Suspend thy purpose, if thou didst intend
 To make this creature fruitful!
 Into her womb convey sterility!

Dry up in her the organs of increase ;
And from her derogate body never spring
A babe to honour her ! If she must teem,
Create her child of spleen ; that it may live,
And be a thwart disnatur'd torment to her !
Let it stamp wrinkles in her brow of youth ;
With cadent tears fret channels in her cheeks ;
Turn all her mother's pains and benefits
To laughter and contempt ; that she may feel
How sharper than a serpent's tooth it is
To have a thankless child !—Away, away !



ACT II.

SCENE I.—*A Court within GLOSTER's Castle.*

Enter EDMUND and CURAN, meeting.

Edmund.

SAVE thee, Curan.

Cur. And you, sir. I have been with your father, and given him notice that the Duke of Cornwall and Regan his duchess will be here with him this night.

Edm. How comes that?

Cur. Have you heard of no likely wars toward 'twixt the Dukes of Cornwall and Albany?

Edm. Not a word.

Cur. You may do, then, in time. Fare you well, sir. *[Exit.]*

Edm. The duke be here to-night? The better! best!

This weaves itself perforce into my business.
My father hath set guard to take my brother;
And I have one thing, of a queasy question,
Which I must act:—briefness and fortune, work!—
Brother, a word;—descend:—brother, I say!

Enter EDGAR.

My father watches:—O sir, fly this place;
Intelligence is given where you are hid:—
You've now the good advantage of the night:—

Have you not spoken 'gainst the Duke of Cornwall?
He's coming hither.

Edg. I'm sure on't, not a word.

Edm. I hear my father coming:—pardon me;
In cunning I must draw my sword upon you:—
Draw: seem to defend yourself: now quit you well.—
Yield:—come before my father.—Light, ho, here!
Fly, brother.—Torches, torches!—So, farewell.

[*Exit EDGAR.*]

Some blood drawn on me would beget opinion

[*Wounds his arm.*]

Of my more fierce endeavour: I have seen drunkards
Do more than this in sport.—Father, father!—
Stop, stop!—No help?

Enter GLOSTER and Servants with torches.

Glo. Now, Edmundo, where's the villain?

Edm. Here stood he in the dark, his sharp sword
out,

Mumbling of wicked charms, conjuring the moon
To stand auspicious mistress,—

Glo. But where is he?

Edm. Look, sir, I bleed.

Glo. Where is the villain, Edmund?

Edm. Fled this way, sir. When by no means he
could—

Glo. Pursue him, ho!—Go after. [*Exeunt some
Servants.*]—By no means what?

Edm. Persuade me to the murder of your lordship.
Seeing how loathly opposite I stood
To his unnatural purpose, in fell motion,
With his preparèd sword he charges home
My unprovided body, lanc'd mine arm:
But when he saw my best alarum'd spirits,
Bold in the quarrel's right, rous'd to th' encounter,
Or whether gasted by the noise I made,
Full suddenly he fled.

Glo. Let him fly far :
 Not in this land shall he remain uncaught.
[Trumpets within.]
 Hark, the duke's trumpets! I know not why he
 comes.—
 All ports I'll bar; the villain shall not scape;
 The duke must grant me that; and of my land,
 Loyal and natural boy, I'll work the means
 To make thee capable.

Enter CORNWALL, REGAN, and Attendants.

Corn. How now, my noble friend! since I came
 hither,—
 Which I can call but now,—I've heard strange news.
Reg. What, did my father's godson seek your life?
 He whom my father nam'd? your Edgar?
Glo. O lady, lady, shame would have it hid!
Reg. Was he not companion with the riotous knights
 That tend upon my father?
Glo. I know not, madam:—'tis too bad, too bad.
Corn. Is he pursu'd?
Glo. Ay, my good lord.
Corn. If he be taken, he shall never more
 Be fear'd of doing harm. For you, Edmund,
 Whose virtue and obedience doth this instant
 So much commend itself, you shall be ours.
 You know not why we came to visit you,—
Reg. Thus out of season, threading dark-ey'd
 night.
 Our father he hath writ, so hath our sister,
 Of differences, which I best thought it fit
 To answer from our home.

Glo. I serve you, madam :
 Your graces are right welcome. *[Exeunt.]*

Enter KENT and OSWALD, severally.

Osw. Good dawning to thee, friend: art of this
 house?

Kent. Ay.

Osw. Where may we set our horses?

Kent. I' th' mire.

Osw. Prithee, if thou lov'st me, tell me.

Kent. I love thee not.

Osw. Why dost thou use me thus? I know thee not.

Kent. Fellow, I know thee.

Osw. What dost thou know me for?

Kent. A knave; a rascal; an eater of broken meats; a base, proud, shallow, beggarly, three-suited, filthy, worsted-stocking knave.

[*Drawing his sword.*]

Osw. Away! I have nothing to do with thee.

Kent. Draw, you rascal: you come with letters 'gainst the king; draw, you rascal.

Osw. Help, ho! murder! help!

Kent. Strike, you slave; stand, rogue, stand.

[*Beating him.*]

Osw. Help, ho! murder! murder!

Enter EDMUND.

Edm. How now! What's the matter?

Enter CORNWALL, REGAN, GLOSTER, and Servants.

Reg. The messengers from our sister and the king

Corn. What is your difference? speak.

Osw. I am scarce in breath, my lord.

Corn. Speak yet, how grew your quarrel?

Osw. This ancient ruffian, sir, whose life I have spar'd at suit of his gray beard,—

Kent. Thou zed! thou unnecessary letter!—"Spare my gray beard," you wagtail!

Corn. Peace, sirrah! Know you no reverence?

Kent. Yes, sir; but anger hath a privilege.

Corn. Why art thou angry?

Kent. That such a knave as this should wear a sword, who wears no honesty.

Corn. Why dost thou call him knave? What's his offence?

Kent. His countenance likes me not.

Corn. No more, perchance, does mine, nor his, nor hers.

Kent. Sir, 'tis my occupation to be plain :
I have seen better faces in my time
Than stands on any shoulder that I see
Before me at this instant.

Corn. This is some fellow,
Who, having been prais'd for bluntness, doth affect
A saucy roughness.

What was the offence you gave him?

Osw. I never gave him any :
It pleas'd the king his master very late
To strike at me, upon his misconstruction ;
When he, conjunct, and flattering his displeasure,
Tripp'd me behind ; drew on me here again.

Corn. Fetch forth the stocks !—
We'll teach you—

Kent. Sir, I am too old to learn :
Call not your stocks for me ; I serve the king.

Corn. Fetch forth the stocks !—As I have life and
honour,
There shall he sit till noon.

Reg. Till noon ! till night, my lord ; and all night
too.

Kent. Why, madam, if I were your father's dog,
You should not use me so.

Reg. Sir, being his knave, I will.

[*Exit. Stocks brought out.*]

Glo. Let me beseech your grace not to do so :
His fault is much, and the good king his master
Will check him for it.

ACT II. SCENE II.

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Corn.

I will answer that.

[*KENT is put in the stocks.*]

[*Exeunt all except GLOSTER and KENT.*]

Glo. I'm sorry for thee, friend; 'tis the duke's pleasure,
Whose disposition, all the world well knows,
Will not be rubb'd nor stopp'd: I'll entreat for thee.

Kent. Pray, do not, sir: I've watch'd, and travell'd hard;
Some time I shall sleep out, the rest I'll whistle.
Give you good morrow.

Glo. The duke's to blame in this; 'twill be ill taken. [Exit.]

Kent. Good king, that must approve the common saw,—

Thou out of heaven's benediction com'st
To the warm sun!
Approach, thou beacon to this under globe,
That by thy comfortable beams I may
Peruse this letter!—I know 'tis from Cordelia,
Who hast most fortunately been informed
Of my obscured course, all weary and o'erwatch'd,
Take vantage, heavy eyes, not to behold
This shameful lodging.
Fortune, good night: smile once more; turn thy
wheel!

SCENE 2.—*The Open Country.*

Enter EDGAR.

Edgar.

E heard myself proclaim'd;
And by the happy hollow of a tree
Escap'd the hunt. No port is free; no place,
That guard, and most unusual vigilance,
Does not attend my taking. While I may 'scape,

ç

I will preserve myself. My face I'll grime with filth
 Blanket my loins ; elf all my hair in knots ;
 And with presented nakedness out-face
 The winds and persecutions of the sky.
 The country gives me proof and precedent
 Of Bedlam beggars, who, with roaring voices,
 Strike in their numb'd and mortifi'd bare arms
 Pins, wooden pricks, nails, sprigs of rosemary ;
 And with this horrible object, from low farms
 Poor pelting villages, sheep-cotes, and mills,
 Sometime with lunatic bans, sometime with prayers,
 Enforce their charity.—“ Poor Turlygood! poor
 Tom ! ”
 That's something yet :—Edgar I nothing am.

SCENE 3.—*Court within GLOSTER's Castle; KENT in
 the stocks.*

Enter, from Castle, LEAR and the Fool.

Lear.

TIS strange that they should so depart from
 home,
 And not send back my messenger.

Fool. 'Shalt see thy other daughter will use thee
 kindly ; for though she's as like this as a crab's like
 an apple, yet I can what I can tell.

Lear. What canst tell, boy ?

Fool. She will taste as like this as a crab does to a
 crab. Thou canst tell why one's nose stands i' the
 middle on's face ?

Lear. No.

Fool. Why, to keep one's eyes of either side's nose ;
 that what a man cannot smell out, he may spy into.

Lear. I did her wrong—to take't again perforce!—
monster ingratitude!

Fool. Canst tell how an oyster makes his shell?

Lear. No.

Fool. Nor I neither; but I can tell why a snail has
a house.

Lear. Why?

Fool. Why, to put his head in; not to give it away
to his daughters, and leave his horns without a case.

Lear. O, let me not be mad, not mad, sweet heaven!
Keep me in temper: I would not be mad!

Kent. [*From the stocks.*] Hail to thee, noble master.

Fool. Ha, ha! he wears cruel garters.

Lear. Ha!

Mak'st thou this shame thy pastime?

Kent.

No, my lord.

Lear. What's he that hath so much thy place
mistook

To set thee here?

Kent.

It is both he and she,—

Your son and daughter.

Lear. No.

Kent. Yes.

Lear. No, I say.

Kent. I say, yea.

Lear. No, no, they would not.

Kent. Yes, they have.

Lear. By Jupiter, I swear, no.

Kent. By Juno, I swear, ay.

Lear.

They durst not do't;

They could not, would not do't; 'tis worse than
murder,

To do upon respect such violent outrage,
Coming from us.

Kent.

My lord, when at their home

I did commend your highness' letters to them,

Ere I was risen, came there a reeking post,

Stew'd in his haste, half breathless, panting forth

From Goneril his mistress, salutations ;
Deliver'd letters, upon whose contents,
They summon'd up their men and straight took
horse ;

Commanded me to follow, and attend
The leisure of their answer ; gave me cold looks :
And meeting here the other messenger,—
Being the very fellow which of late
Display'd so saucily against your highness,—
Having more man than wit about me, drew :
He rais'd the house with loud and coward cries.
Your son and daughter found this trespass worth
The shame which here it suffers.

Fool. Winter's not gone yet, if the wild-geese fly
that way.

Lear. O, how this mother swells up toward my
heart !

Hysterica passio,—down, thou climbing sorrow,
Thy element's below !—Where is this daughter ?

Kent. With the earl, sir, here within.

Lear. Follow me not ;
Stay here. *[Exit.]*

Gent. Made you no more offence but what you
speak of ?

Kent. None.

How chance the king comes with so small a train ?

Fool. An thou hadst been set i' the stocks for that
question, thou hadst well deserv'd it.

Kent. Why, fool ?

Fool. That sir which serves and seeks for gain,
And follows but for form,
Will pack when it begins to rain,
And leave thee in the storm.

Kent. Where learn'd you this, fool ?

Fool. Not i' the stocks, fool.

Re-enter LEAR with GLOSTER.

Lear. Deny to speak with me? They're sick,—
they're weary?

They have travell'd all the night? Mere fetches!—
The images of revolt and flying off.
Fetch me a better answer.

Glo. My dear lord,
You know the fiery quality of the duke.

Lear. Vengeance! plague! death! confusion!—
Fiery! what quality? Why, Gloster, Gloster,
I'd speak to the Duke of Cornwall and his wife.

Glo. Well, my good lord, I have inform'd them so.

Lear. Inform'd them! Dost thou understand me,
man?

The king would speak with Cornwall; the dear
father

Would with his daughter speak, commands her
service:

Are they inform'd of this?—My breath and blood!—

Fiery? the fiery duke?—Tell the hot duke that—

No, but not yet:—may be he is not well:

Infirmity doth still neglect all office

Whereto our health is bound; we're not ourselves

When nature, being oppress'd, commands the mind

To suffer with the body: I'll forbear.

Death on my state! wherefore

[*Looking on KENT.*

Should he sit here? give me my servant forth.

Go tell the duke and's wife I'd speak with them,

Now, presently: bid them come forth and hear me,

Or at their chamber door I'll beat the drum

Till it cry *sleep to death*.

Enter CORNWALL, REGAN, GLOSTER and Servants,

Corn.

Hail to your grace!

Lear. Good morrow to you both. [*Aside.* O, me!
my heart, my rising heart!—keep down.

[*KENT is set at liberty.*

Reg. I am glad to see your highness.

Lear. Regan, I think you are ; I know what reason
I have to think so ; if thou should'st not be glad,
I would divorce me from thy mother's tomb,
Sepulchring an adultress.—[*To KENT.*] O, are you
free ?

Some other time for that.—Belovèd Regan,
Thy sister's naught : O Regan, she hath tied
Sharp-tooth'd unkindness, like a vulture, here,—

[*Points to his heart.*

I can scarce speak to thee ; thou'lt not believe
Of how deprav'd a quality—O Regan !

Reg. I pray you, sir, take patience : I have hope
You less know how to value her desert
Than she to scant her duty.

Lear. Say, how is that ?

Reg. I cannot think my sister in the least
Would fail her obligation.

Lear. My curses on her !

Reg. O, sir, you are old.

You should be rul'd, and led ; therefore, I pray you,
That to our sister you do make return ;
Say you have wrong'd her, sir.

Lear. Ask her forgiveness ?

Do you but mark how this becomes the house :

"Dear daughter, I confess that I am old ;

Age is unnecessary : on my knees I beg [Kneeling.

That you'll vouchsafe me raiment, bed, and food."

Reg. Good sir, no more ; these are unsightly
tricks :

Return you to my sister.

Lear. Never, Regan :

She hath abated me of half my train ;

Look'd black upon me ; struck me with her tongue,
Most serpent-like, upon the very heart :—
All the stor'd vengeance of heaven fall
On her ingrateful top ! Infect her beauty,
You fen-suck'd fogs, drawn by the powerful sun,
To fall and blast her pride !

Reg. O the blest gods ! so will you wish on me,
When the rash mood is on.

Lear. No, Regan, thou shalt never have my curse :
Thy tender-hefted nature shall not give
Thee o'er to harshness : her eyes are fierce ; but thine
Do comfort, and not burn : thou better know'st
The offices of nature, bond of childhood,
Effects of courtesy, dues of gratitude ;
Thy half 'o the kingdom hast thou not forgot,
Wherein I thee endow'd.

Reg. Good sir, to the purpose.

Lear. Who put my man i' the stocks ?

[*Trumpets within.*]

Corn. What trumpet's that ?

Reg. I know't,—my sister's.

Enter OSWALD.

Is your lady come ?

Lear. Out, varlet, from my sight !

[*Trumpets.*] Ah ! Who comes here ? O heavens,
If you do love old men, if your sweet sway
Allow obedience, if yourselves are old,
Make it your cause ; send down, and take my part !—

Enter GONERIL, Ladies, and Attendants.

Art not asham'd to look upon this beard ?—

O Regan, wilt thou take her by the hand ?

Gon. Why not by the hand, sir ? How have I
offended ?

All's not offence that indiscretion finds
And dotage terms so.

Lear. [*Aside.*] O sides, you are too tough !
Will you yet hold ?—[*Aloud.*] How came my man
i'th' stocks ?

Corn. I set him there, sir.

Lear. You ! did you ?

Reg. I pray you, father, being weak, seem so.
If, till the expiration of your month,
You will return and sojourn with my sister,
Dismissing half your train, come then to me :
I'm now from home, and out of that provision
Which shall be needful for your entertainment.

Lear. Return to her, and fifty men dismiss'd ?
No, rather I abjure all roofs, and choose
To wage against the enmity o' th' air ;
To be a comrade with the wolf, and owl,—
Necessity's sharp pinch !—Return with her ?
Persuade me rather to be slave and sumpter
To this detested groom.

Gon. At your choice, sir.

Lear. I prithee, daughter, do not make me mad.
I will not trouble thee, my child ; farewell :
We'll no more meet, no more see one another :—
But yet thou art my flesh, my blood, my daughter ;
Or rather a disease that's in my flesh,
Which I must needs call mine ; but I'll not chide
thee ;

Let shame come when it will, I do not call it :
I do not bid the thunder-bearer shoot,
Nor tell tales of thee to high-judging Jove :
Mend when thou canst ; be better at thy leisure :
I can be patient ; I can stay with Regan,
I and my hundred knights.

Reg. Not altogether so :
I look'd not for you yet, nor am provided
For your fit welcome.

Lear. Is this well spoken now ?

Reg. I dare avouch it, sir : what, fifty followers ?
Is it not well ? What should you need of more ?

Gon. Why might not you, my lord, receive attendance

From those that she calls servants or from mine?

Reg. Why not, my lord! If you will come to me,—
For now I spy a danger,—I entreat you
To bring but five-and-twenty: to no more
Will I give place or notice.

Lear. I gave you all—

Reg. And in good time you gave it.

Lear. Those wicked creatures yet do look well-favour'd!

When others are more wicked, not being the worst
Stands in some rank of praise.—[*To GONERIL.*] I'll
go with thee:

Thy fifty yet doth double five-and-twenty,
And thou art twice her love.

Gon. Hear me, my lord:

What need you five-and-twenty, ten, or five,
To follow in a house where twice so many
Have a command to tend you?

Reg. What need one?

Lear. O, reason not the need: our basest beggars
Are, in the poorest thing, superfluous:
Allow not nature more than nature needs,
Man's life is cheap as beast's. Thou art a lady;
If only to go warm were gorgeous,
Why, nature needs not what thou gorgeous wear'st
Which scarcely keeps thee warm. But, for true
need,—

You heavens, give me that patience, patience I need
You see me here, you gods, a poor old man,
As full of grief as age; wretched in both!
If it be you that stir these daughters' hearts
Against their father, fool me not so much
To bear it tamely; touch me with noble anger,
O, let not women's weapons, water-drops,
Stain my man's cheeks!—No, you unnatural hags,

I will have such revenges on you both,
That all the world shall—I will do such things—
What they are, yet I know not ; but they shall be
The terrors of the earth. You think I'll weep ;
No, I'll not weep :—

I have full cause of weeping ; but this heart

[Storm heard at a distance.]

Shall break into a hundred thousand flaws,
Or e'er I'll weep.—O, fool, I shall go mad !

[Exit.]



ACT III.

SCENE I.—*A Heath.*

*A storm, with thunder and lightning. Enter KENT
and a Gentleman, meeting.*

Kent.

WHO'S there, besides foul weather?

Gent. One minded like the weather
most unquietly.

Kent. I know you. Where's the king?

Gent. Contending with the fretful elements;
Bids the wind blow the earth into the sea,
Or swell the curlèd waters 'bove the main,
That things might change or cease.

Kent. But who is with him?

Gent. None but the fool; who labours to out-jest
His heart-struck injuries.

Kent. Sir, I do know you;
And dare commend a dear thing to you. There's
Division 'twixt Albany and Cornwall;
And, true it is, from France there comes a power

Into this scatter'd kingdom; and are at point
 To show their open banner. Now to you:
 If on my credit you dare build so far
 To make your speed to Dover, you shall find
 Some that will thank you. If you shall see Cordelia,—
 As fear not but you shall,—show her this ring;
 And she will tell you who your fellow is
 That yet you do not know. Fie on this storm!
 I will go seek the king.

Gent. Have you no more to say?

Kent. Few words, but, to effect, more than all yet,—
 That, when we've found the king,—he that first
 lights on him
 Holloa the other. [*Exeunt severally.*]

SCENE 2.—*Another part of the Heath, with a Hovel.*
[*Storm continues.*]

Lear.

BLOW, winds, and crack your cheeks! rage!
 blow!
 You cataracts and hurricanoes, spout
 Till you have drench'd our steeples, drown'd the
 cocks!
 You sulphurous and thought-executing fires,
 Singe my white head! And thou, all-shaking-
 thunder,
 Strike flat the thick rotundity o' the world!
 Crack nature's moulds, all germents spill at once,
 That make ingrateful man!

Enter Fool.

Fool. O nuncle, in and ask thy daughters' blessing:
 here's a night pities neither wise men nor fools.

Lear. Rumble thy bellyfull! Spit, fire! spout rain!
Nor rain, wind, thunder, fire, are my daughters:
I tax not you, you elements, with unkindness;
I never gave you kingdom, call'd you children,
You owe me no subscription: then let fall
Your horrible pleasure; here I stand, your slave,
A poor, infirm, weak, and despis'd old man.
But yet I call you servile ministers,
That have with two pernicious daughters join'd
Your high-engender'd battles 'gainst a head
So old and white as this. O, O, 'tis foul.

Fool. He that has a house to put's head in has a
good head-piece.

Kent. [*within.*] Who's there?

Fool. Marry, a wise man and a fool.

Enter KENT.

Kent. Alas, sir, are you here? Alack, bare-headed!
Gracious my lord, hard by here is a hovel;
Some friendship will it lend you 'gainst the tempest;
Repose you there.

Lear. My wits begin to turn.—
Come on, my boy: how dost, my boy? art cold?
I'm cold myself.—Where is the straw, my fellow?
The art of our necessities is strange,
That can make vile things precious. Come, your
hovel.—
Poor fool and knave, I've one part in my heart
That's sorry yet for thee.

Fool. [*Singing.*] *He that has and a little tiny wit,
With hey, ho, the wind and the rain,—
Must make content with his fortunes fit,
Though the rain it raineth every day.*

Lear. True, my good boy.

Kent. Here is the place, my lord ; good my lord,
enter.

Lear. Let me alone.

Kent. Good my lord, enter here.

Lear. Wilt break my heart ?

Kent. I had rather break mine own.

Lear. Thou think'st 'tis much that this contentious
storm

Invades us to the skin : so 'tis to thee ;
But where the greater malady is fix'd,
The lesser is scarce felt. The tempest in my mind
Doth from my senses take all feeling else
Save what beats there.—Filial ingratitude !
No, I will weep no more.—In such a night
To shut me out !—Pour on ; I will endure :—
In such a night as this ! O, Regan, Goneril !—
Your old kind father, whose frank heart gave all,—
O, that way madness lies ; let me shun that ;
No more of that.

Kent. Good my lord, enter here.

Lear. Prithee, go in thyself ; seek thine own ease :
This tempest will not give me leave to ponder
On things would hurt me more.—But I'll go in—
[*To the Fool.*] In, boy ; go first. You houseless
poverty,—
Nay, get thee in. I'll pray, and then I'll sleep.—

[*Fool goes in.*]

Poor naked wretches, wheresoe'er you are,
That bide the pelting of this pitiless storm,
How shall your houseless heads and unfed sides,
Your loop'd and window'd raggedness, defend you
From seasons such as these ? O, I have ta'en
Too little care of this ! Take physic, pomp ;
Expose thyself to feel what wretches feel,
That thou may'st shake the superflux to them,
And show the heavens more just.

Fool. [Within.] Help! Help!

Edgar. [Within.] Fathom and half, fathom and half!
Poor Tom! [The Fool runs out from the hovel.]

Fool. Come not in here, nuncle, here's a spirit.
Help me, help me!

Kent. Give me thy hand.—Who's there?

Fool. A spirit, a spirit: he says his name's poor Tom.

Kent. What art thou that dost grumble there i' the straw? Come forth.

Enter EDGAR disguised as a madman.

Edg. Away the foul fiend follows me!—

Through the sharp hawthorn blows the cold wind—
Hum! go to thy cold bed, and warm thee.

Lear. Didst thou give all to thy two daughters?
And art thou come to this?

Edg. Who gives anything to poor Tom? whom the foul fiend hath led through fire and through flame, through ford and whirlpool, o'er bog and quagmire; that hath made him proud of heart, to ride on a bay trotting-horse over four-inch'd bridges, to course his own shadow for a traitor.—Bless thy five wits!—Tom's a-cold,—O do de, do de, do de.—Do poor Tom some charity, whom the foul fiend vexes:—there could I have him now,—and there,—and there again, and there.

Lear. What, have his daughters brought him to this pass?—

Now all the plagues that in the pendulous air
Hang fated o'er men's faults, light on thy daughters.

Kent. He hath no daughters, sir.

Lear. Death, traitor! nothing could have subdu'd
nature

To such a lowness but his únkind daughters.—
Why, thou wert better in thy grave than to
answer with thy uncover'd body this extremity of

the skies.—Is man no more than this? Consider him well. Thou ow'st the worm no silk, the beast no hide, the sheep no wool, the cat no perfume.—Ha! here's three on's are sophisticated!—Thou art the thing itself: unaccommodated man is no more but such a poor, bare, forkèd animal as thou art.—Off, off, you lendings!—come, unbutton here.

[Tearing off his clothes.]

Fool. Prithee, nuncle, be contented; 'tis a naughty night to swim in.—Look, here comes a walking fire.

Edg. This is the foul fiend Flibbertigibbet: he begins at curfew, and walks till the first cock; mildews the white wheat, and hurts the poor creature of earth.

*Swiethold footed thrice the wold;
He met the night-mare, and her nine-fold;
Bid her alight,
And her troth plight,*

And, aroint thee, witch, aroint thee right!

Kent. How fares your Grace?

Lear. What's he?

Kent. Who's there? What is't you seek?

Enter GLOSTER with a torch.

Glo. What, are you there? Your names?

Edg. Poor Tom; that eats the swimming frog, the toad, the tadpole, the wall-newt and the water; that in the fury of his heart, when the foul fiend rages, swallows the old rat and the ditch-dog.

*But mice and rats, and such small deer,
Have been Tom's food for seven long year.*

Beware my follower.—Peace, Smulkin; peace, thou fiend.

Glo. What, hath your grace no better company?

Edg. Poor Tom's a-cold.

Glo. Go in with me : my duty cannot suffer
T' obey in all your daughters' hard commands :
Though their injunction be to bar my doors,
And let this tyrannous night take hold upon you,
Yet have I ventur'd to come seek you out,
And bring you where both fire and food is ready.

Lear. First let me talk with this philosopher.—
What is the cause of thunder ?

Kent. Good my lord, take his offer.

Lear. I'll talk a word with this same learnèd
Theban.—

What is your study ?

Edg. How to prevent the fiend, and to kill vermin.

Lear. Let me ask you one word in private.

Kent. Impòrtune him once more to go, my lord ;
His wits begin t' unsettle.

Glo. Canst thou blame him ?
His daughters seek his death :—ah, that good
Kent !—

He said it would be thus,—poor banish'd man !—
Thou say'st the king grows mad ; I'll tell thee,
friend,

I'm almost mad myself : I had a son,
Now outlaw'd from my blood : he sought my life,
But lately, very late : true to tell thee,
The grief hath craz'd my wits.—What a night's
this !—

I do beseech your grace,—

Lear. O, cry you mercy, sir.

Noble philosopher, your company.

Edg. Tom's a-cold.

Glo. In, fellow, there, into th' hovel : keep thee
warm.

Lear. Come, let's in all.

Kent. This way, my lord.

Lear. With him ;
I will keep still with my philosopher,

Kent. Good my lord, soothe him; let him take the fellow.

Glo. Take him you on.

Kent. Sirrah, come on; go along with us.

Lear. Come, good Athenian.

Glo. No words, no words: hush.

Edg. Child Rowland to the dark tower came,
His word was still—Fie, foh, and fum,
I smell the blood of a British man.

[*Exeunt. Storm continues.*]

SCENE 3.—*Farm House adjoining GLOSTER'S Castle.*

Enter GLOSTER and KENT.

Gloster,

HERE is better than the open air; take it thankfully. I will not be long from you.

Kent. The Gods reward your kindness!

[*Exit GLOSTER and KENT.*]

Enter LEAR, EDGAR and Fool.

Edg. Frateretto calls me, and tells me Nero is an angler in the lake of darkness. Pray, [*To Fool*] innocent, and beware the foul fiend.

Fool. Prithee, nuncle, tell me whether a madman be a gentleman or a yeoman?

Lear. A king, a king!

Fool. No, he's a yeoman that has a gentleman to his son; for he's a mad yeoman that sees his son a gentleman before him.

Lear. To have a thousand with red burning spits Come hissing in upon 'em,—

Edg. The foul fiend bites my back.

Lear. It shall be done; I will arraign them straight.

ACT III. SCENE III.

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[To EDGAR.] Come, sit thou here, most learned
justicer;

[To the Fool.] Thou, sapient sir, sit here. Now,
you she foxes!

Re-enter KENT.

Edg. [*Aside.*] Look, where he stands and glares!
[*Aloud.*] Wantest thou eyes at trial, madam?

Come o'er the bourn, Bessy, to me.

Kent. How do you, sir? Stand you not so amaz'd
Will you lie down and rest upon the cushions?

Lear. I'll see their trial first.—Bring in the
evidence.—

[To EDGAR.] Thou rob'd man of justice, take thy
place;—

[To the Fool.] And thou, his yoke-fellow of equity,
Bench by his side.—[To KENT.] You are o' the
commission,

Sit you too.

Edg. Let us deal justly.
Pur! the cat is gray.

Lear. Arraign her first! 'tis Goneril. I here take
my oath before this honourable assembly, she kick'd
the poor king, her father.

Fool. Come hither, mistress. Is your name
Goneril?

Lear. She cannot deny it.

Fool. Cry you mercy, I took you for a joint-stool.

Lear. And here's another, whose warp'd looks
proclaim

What store her heart is made on.—Stop her there!
Arms, arms, sword, fire!—Corruption in the palace!—
False justicer, why hast thou let her scape?

Edg. Bless thy five wits! [*Aside.*] My tears
begin to take his part so much,
They'll mar my counterfeiting.

Lear. The little dogs and all,
Tray, Blanch, and Sweetheart, see, they bark at me.

Edg. Tom will throw his head at them.—Avaunt,
you curs !

*Be thy mouth or black or white,
Tooth that poisons if it bite ;
Mastiff, greyhound, mongrel grim,
Hound or spaniel, brach or lym,
Or bobtail tike or trundle-tail,—
Tom will make them weep and wail :
For, with throwing thus my head,
Dogs leap the hatch, and all are fled.*

Do de, de, de.—

*Sissy, come march to wakes,
And fairs and market towns.—*

[*Aside.*] Poor Tom, thy horn is dry.

Lear. Then, let them anatomize Regan, see what
breeds about her heart. Is there any cause in nature,
that makes these hard hearts ?—[*To EDGAR.*] You,
sir, I entertain for one of my hundred ; only I do
not like the fashion of your garments : you will say
they are Persian attire ; but let them be chang'd.

Kent. Now, good my lord, lie here and rest awhile.

Lear. Make no noise, make no noise ; draw the
curtains : so, so, so : we'll go to supper i' the
morning : so, so, so.

Fool. And I'll go to bed at noon.

Re-enter GLOSTER.

Glo. Where is the king, my master ?

Kent. Here, sir ; but trouble him not, his wits
are gone.

Glo. Good friend, I prithee, take him in thy
arms ;

I have overheard a plot of death upon him :

ACT III. SCENE III.

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There is a litter ready ; lay him in't,
And drive toward Dover, friend, where thou shalt meet
Both welcome and protection.

Kent. Oppress'd nature sleeps :
This rest might yet have balm'd thy broken sinews.
[*To the Fool.*] Come help to bear thy master ;
Thou must not stay behind.

[*KENT and the Fool bear the King.*]



ACT IV.

SCENE I.—*Before the DUKE OF ALBANY's Castle.*

Enter GONERIL, EDMUND and OSWALD.

Goneril.

BACK, Edmund, to my brother ;
Hasten his musters and conduct his
powers :

I must change arms at home, and give
the distaff

Into my husband's hands. This trusty servant
Shall pass between us. Wear this ; spare speech ;
Decline your head ; this kiss if it durst speak
Would stretch thy spirits up into the air !

[Giving a favour.]

Conceive, and fare thee well.

Edm. Yours in the ranks of death.

Gon. My most dear Gloster ! *[Exit EDMUND.]*

O, the difference of man and man !

Osw. Madam, here comes my lord. *[Exit.]*

Enter ALBANY.

Alb.

O, Goneril

You are not worth the dust which the rude wind
Blows in your face.

Gon.

No more.

Alb.

What have you

done?

Tigers, not daughters, what have you perform'd?

A father, and a gracious aged man,

Most barbarous, most degenerate! have you madded.

Gon. Milk-liver'd man!

Who hast not in thy brows an eye discerning

Thine honour from thy suffering; where's thy
drum?

France spreads his banners in our noiseless land;

Whiles thou, a moral fool, sitt'st still, and criest

"Alack, why does he so?"

Alb.

See thyself, devil!

Gon. O, vain fool!

[*Exit.*

Enter CURAN.

Curan. O my good lord, the Duke of Cornwall's
dead;

Slain by his servant, going to put out

The eyes of Gloster.

Alb.

Gloster's eyes!

Curan. A servant that he bred, thrill'd with
remorse,

Oppos'd against the act, bending his sword

To his great master; who, thereat enrag'd,

Flew on him, and amongst them fell'd him
dead.

This letter, madam, craves a speedy answer;

Tis from your sister.

Gon. I'll read, and answer.

[*Exit.*

Alb. Where was his son, when they did take his
eyes?

Curan. Come with my lady, hither.

Alb. He is not here?

Curan. No, my good lord ; I met him back again.

Alb. Knows he the wickedness ?

Curan. Ay, my good lord ; 'twas he inform'd
against him.

Alb. Gloster, I live
And to revenge thine eyes. Come hither, friend :
Tell me what more thou know'st. *[Exeunt.]*

SCENE 2.—*Open Country.*

Enter EDGAR.

Edgar.

ET better thus, and known to be contemn'd,
Than still contemn'd and flatter'd. To be
worst,

The lowest and most dejected thing of fortune,
Stands still in esperance, lives not in fear.

Welcome, then,
Thou unsubstantial air that I embrace !
The wretch that thou hast blown unto the worst
Owes nothing to thy blasts.—But who comes here ?

Enter GLOSTER, led by an Old Man.

My father, poorly led ?—World, world, O world !
But that thy strange mutations make us hate thee,
Life would not yield to age.

Old Man. O, my good lord,
I've been your tenant, and your father's tenant,
These fourscore years.

Glo. Away, get thee away ; good friend, be gone.

Old Man. Alack sir, you cannot see your way.

Glo. I have no way, and therefore want no eyes ;
I stumbled when I saw : Ah ! dear son Edgar,
Might I but live to see thee in my touch,
I'd say I had eyes again !

Old Man. How now! Who's there?

Edg. [Aside.] O gods! Who is't can say, "I'm at the worst"?

I'm worse than e'er I was.

Old Man. 'Tis poor mad Tom.

Glo. Is it a beggar-man?

Old Man. Madman and beggar too.

Glo. He has some reason, else he could not beg.
I' the last night's storm I such a fellow saw;
Which made me think a man a worm.

Edg. [Aside.] Bless thee, master!

Glo. Is that the naked fellow?

Old Man. Ay, my lord.

Glo. Then, prithee, get thee gone;
And bring some covering for this naked soul,
Which I'll entreat to lead me.

Old Man. Alack, sir, he is mad.

Glo. Do as I bid thee; above the rest, be gone.

Old Man. I'll bring him the best 'parel that I have,
Come on't what will. *[Exit.]*

Glo. Sirrah, naked fellow,—

Edg. Poor Tom's a-cold.—*[Aside.]* I cannot daub it further.

Glo. Come hither, fellow.

Edg. [Aside.] And yet I must. Bless thy sweet eyes!

Glo. Dost thou know Dover?

Edg. Ay, master.

Glo. There is a cliff, whose high and bending head
Looks fearfully in the confinèd deep:
Bring me but to the very brim of it,
And I'll repair the misery thou dost bear
With something rich about me: from that place
I shall no leading need.

Edg. Give me thy arm:

Poor Tom shall lead thee. *[Exeunt.]*

SCENE 3.—*Country near Dover.**Enter GLOSTER, and EDGAR dressed like a peasant.**Gloster.*

HEN shall I come to the top of that same hill?

Edg. You do climb up it now : look, how we labour.

Glo. Methinks the ground is even.

Edg. Horrible steep.
Hark, do you hear the sea?

Glo. No, truly.

Edg. Why, then, your other senses grow imperfect
By your eyes' anguish.

Glo. So may it be, indeed :
Methinks thy voice is alter'd ; and thou speak'st
In better phrase and matter than thou didst.

Edg. You're much deceiv'd : in nothing am I
chang'd
But in my garments.

Glo. Methinks you're better spoken.

Edg. Come on, sir : here's the place :—stand still.
—How fearful.

And dizzy 'tis to cast one's eyes so low !
The crows and choughs that wing the midway air
Show scarce so gross as beetles : half way down
Hangs one that gathers samphire,—dreadful trade !
Methinks he seems no bigger than his head :
The fishernien, that walk upon the beach,
Appear like mice : the murmuring surge
That on th' unnumber'd idle pebbles chafes,
Cannot be heard so high.—I'll look no more ;

Lest my brain turn, and the deficient sight
Topple down headlong.

Glo. Set me where you stand.

Edg. Give me your hand:—you're now within a
foot

Of th' extreme verge: for all beneath the moon
Would I not leap upright.

Glo. Let go my hand.

Here, friend, 's another purse; in it a jewel
Well worth a poor man's taking: fairies and gods
Prosper it with thee! Go thou further off.
Bid me farewell, and let me hear thee going.

Edg. Now fare you well, good sir.

Glo. With all my heart.

Edg. [*Aside.*] Why I do trifle thus with his
despair

Is done to cure it.

Glo. [*Kneeling.*] O you mighty gods!
This world I do renounce, and, in your sights,
Shake patiently my great affliction off.
If Edgar live, O, bless him!—
Now fare thee well.

[*GLOSTER is about to leap, when EDGAR catches him.*]

Away, and let me die.

Edg. Had'st thou been aught but gossamer,
feathers, air,
So many fathom down precipitating,
Thoud'st shiver'd like an egg: but thou dost
breathe;
Thy life's a miracle.

Hold! Who comes here?

Enter LEAR, fantastically dressed with wild flowers.

Lear. No, they cannot touch me for coining; I am
the king himself.

Edg. [*Aside.*] O thou side-piercing sight !

Lear. Nature's above art in that respect.—There's your press-money. That fellow handles his bow like a crow-keeper : draw me a clothier's yard.—Look, look, a mouse ! Peace, peace ;—this piece of toasted cheese will do't.—There's my gauntlet ; I'll prove it on a giant.—Bring up the brown bills.—O, well flown, bird !—i' the clout, i' the clout : hewgh !—Give the word.

Edg. Sweet marjoram.

Lear. Pass.

Glo. I know that voice.

Lear. Ha ! Goneril,—with a white beard !—They flatter'd me like a dog ; and told me I had white hairs in my beard ere the black ones were there.—To say "ay" and "no" to every thing that I said "ay" and "no" to, was no good divinity. When the rain came to wet me once, and the wind to make me chatter ; when the thunder would not peace at my bidding ; there I found 'em, there I smelt 'em out. Go to, they are not men o' their words : they told me I was every thing ; 'tis a lie,—I am not ague-proof.

Glo. The trick of that voice I do well remember : Is't not the king !

Lear. Ay, every inch a king :
When I do stare, see how the subject quakes !
I pardon that man's life.—What was thy cause ?—
Adultery ?—

Thou shalt not die : die for adultery ! No :
For Gloucester's bastard son
Was kinder to his father than my daughters.
Down from the waist they are Centaurs.

Fie, fie, fie ! pah, pah ! Give me an ounce of civet,
good apothecary, to sweeten my imagination : there's
money for thee.

Glo. O, let me kiss that hand !

Lear. Let me wipe it first ; it smells of mortality.

Glo. O ruin'd peace of nature !—Dost thou know me ?

Lear. I remember thine eyes well enough. Dost thou squiny at me ? No, do thy worst, blind Cupid ; I'll not love.—Read thou this challenge ; mark but the penning of it.

Glo. Were all the letters suns, I could not see one.

Lear. Read.

Glo. What, with this case of eyes ?

Lear. O, ho, are you there with me ? No eyes in your head, nor no money in your purse ? Yet you see how this world goes.

Glo. I see it feelingly.

Lear. What, art mad ? A man may see how this world goes with no eyes. Look with thine ears : see how yond justice rails upon yond simple thief. Hark, in thine ear : change places ; and, handy-dandy, which is the justice, which is the thief ?—Thou hast seen a farmer's dog bark at a beggar ?

Glo. Ay, sir.

Lear. And the creature run from the cur ? There thou might'st behold the great image of authority : A dog's obey'd in office.—

The usurer hangs the cozener.

Through tatter'd clothes small vices do appear ;

Robes and furr'd gowns hide all.

Get thee glass eyes ;

And, like a scurvy politician, seem

To see the things thou dost not.—Now, now, now, now :

Pull off my boots : harder, harder ; so.

Edg. [*Aside.*] O, matter and impertinency mix'd
Reason in madness !

Lear. If thou wilt weep my fortunes, take my eyes.

I know thee well enough ! thy name is Gloster :

Thou must be patient ; we came crying hither :

Thou know'st, the first time that we smell the air,

We waul and cry.—I will preach to thee: mark.

Glo. Alack, alack the day!

Lear. When we are born, we cry, that we are
come

To this great stage of fools. This' a good block;

[*Taking EDGAR'S hat.*

I were a delicate stratagem, to shoe

A troop of horse with felt: I'll put 't in proof;

And when I have stol'n upon these sons-in-law,

Then, kill, kill, kill, kill, kill, kill!

Enter a Gentleman, with Attendants.

Gent. O, here he is: lay hand upon him.—Sir,
Your most dear daughter—

Lear. No rescue? What, a prisoner? I am even
The natural fool of fortune.—Use me well;
You shall have ransom. Let me have a surgeon;
I am cut t' the brains.

Gent. You shall have anything.

Lear. What!

I will be jovial: come, come; I am a king,
My masters, know you that?

Gent. You are a royal one, and we obey you.

Lear. Then there's life in't. Nay, an
You get it, you shall get it by running. Sa, sa, sa, sa.

[*Exit.*

Gent. A sight most pitiful in the meanest wretch,
Past speaking of in a king!

[*Exeunt Gentleman and Attendants.*

Glo. You ever-gentle gods, take my breath from
me;

Let not my worser spirit tempt me again
To die before you please!

Enter OSWALD.

Osw. A proclaim'd prize!

Thou old unhappy traitor,
Briefly thyself remember :—the sword is out
That must destroy thee.

Glo. Now, let thy friendly hand
Put strength enough to't. [*EDGAR interposes.*]

Osw. Wherefore, bold peasant,
Dar'st thou support a publish'd traitor? Hence;
Let go his arm.

Edg. Chill not let go, zir, without vurther'casion.

Osw. Let go, slave, or thou diest!

Edg. Good gentleman, go your gait, and let poor
volk pass. An chud ha' been zwaggered out of my
life, 'twould not ha' been zo long as 'tis by a vort-
night. Nay, come not near the old man; or ise try
whether your costard or my bat be the harder.

Osw. Out, dunghill! [*They fight.*]

Edg. Chill pick your teeth, zir. [*OSWALD falls*]

Osw. Slave, thou hast slain me.

Give the letters which thou find'st about me
To Edmund Earl of Gloster: seek him out
Upon the British party :—O, untimely death!

[*Dies.*]

Edg. I know thee well—a serviceable villain.

Glo. What, is he dead?

Edg. Sit you down, father; rest you.—

Let's see his pockets: these letters that he speaks of
May be my friends.—He's dead; I'm only sorry
He had no other death's-man.—Let us see:—

[*Reads.*] "*Let our reciprocal vows be remember'd.
You have many opportunities to cut him off: if your will
want not, time and place will be fruitfully offer'd.
There is nothing done, if he return the conqueror; then
am I the prisoner, and his bed my gaol.*"

"*Your—wife, so I would say—affectionate servant,
"GONERIL."*

O undistinguish'd space of woman's will!
A plot upon her virtuous husband's life;

And the exchange my brother! In the mature time,
With this ungracious scroll, I'll strike the sight
Of the death-practis'd Duke. Give me your hand:

[*Distant drum.*

Far off, methinks, I hear the beaten drum:
Come, father, I'll bestow you with a friend. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE 4.—*The French Camp.*

Enter KENT and a Gentleman.

Kent.

WHY the King of France is so suddenly gone
back know you the reason?

Gent. Something he left imperfect in the
state, which since his coming forth is thought
of.

Kent. Did your letters pierce the queen to any
demonstration of grief?

Gent. Ay, sir; she took them, read them in my
presence;

And now and then an ample tear trill'd down
Her delicate cheek; it seem'd she was a queen
Over her passion; who, most rebel like,
Sought to be king o'er her.

Kent. O, then it mov'd her.

Gent. Not to a rage: patience and sorrow strove
Who should express her goodliest. You have seen
Sunshine and rain at once: her smiles and tears
Were like a better way: those happy smilets,
That played on her ripe lip, seem'd not to know
What guests were in her eyes. In brief,
Sorrow would be a rarity most belov'd,
If all could so become it.

Kent. Made she no verbal question?

Gent. Faith, once or twice she heav'd the name of
"father"
Pantingly forth, as if it press'd her heart ;
Cried " Sisters ! sisters ! What, i' the storm ? i' the
night ?
Let pity not be believ'd ! " There she shook
The holy water from her heavenly eyes,
And clamour moisten'd : then away she started
To deal with grief alone.

Kent. You spoke not with her since ?

Gent. No.

Kent. Was this before the king return'd ?

Gent. No, since.

Kent. Well, sir, the poor distress'd Lear's i' the
town ;

Who sometime in his better tune remembers
What we are come about, and by no means
Will yield to see his daughter.

Gent. Why, good sir ?

Kent. His own unkindness,
That stripp'd her from his benediction, stings
His mind so venomously, that burning shame
Detains him from Cordelia.

Gent. Alack, poor gentleman !

Kent. Of Albany's and Cornwall's powers you
heard not ?

Gent. 'Tis so, they are afoot.

Kent. Well, sir, I'll bring you to our master Lear,
And leave you to attend him :
When I am known aright, you shall not grieve
Lending me this acquaintance. I pray you,
Go along with me. *[Exeunt.]*

SCENE 5.—*A Tent in the French Camp.*

LEAR on a bed asleep.

Soft music playing.

CORDELIA and KENT. Physician, Gentleman, and
others watching.

Cordelia.



THOU good Kent, how shall I live and work,
To match thy goodness? My life will be
too short,

And every measure fail me.

Kent. To be acknowledg'd, madam, is o'erpaid.

Cor. How does the king?

Phy. Madam, sleeps well.

Cor. O you kind gods,

Cure this great breach in his abusèd nature!

Th' untun'd and jarring senses, O, wind up

Of this child-changèd father!

Phy. So please your majesty

That we may wake the king: he hath slept long.

Cor. Be govern'd by your knowledge, and proceed

I' th' sway of your own will. Is he array'd?

Phy. Ay, madam; in the heaviness of sleep

We put fresh garments on him.

Kent. Be by, good madam, when we do awake him;
I doubt not of his temperance.

Cor. Very well.

Phy. Please you, draw near. Louder the music there!

Cor. O my dear father! Restoration hang
Thy med'cine on my lips; and let this kiss
Repair those violent harms that my two sisters
Have in thy reverence made!

Kent. Kind and dear princess!

Cor. Had you not been their father, these white
flakes

Had challeng'd pity of them. Was this a face
To be oppos'd against the warring winds?
Mine enemy's dog,
Though he had bit me, should have stood that night
Against my fire; and wast thou fain, poor father,
To hovel thee with swine, and rogues forlorn,
In short and musty straw? Alack, alack!
'Tis wonder that thy life and wits at once
Had not concluded all.—He wakes; speak to him.

Phy. Madam, do you; 'tis fittest.

Cor. How does my royal lord? how fares your
majesty?

Lear. You do me wrong to take me out o' the
grave:—

Thou art a soul in bliss; but I am bound
Upon a wheel of fire, that mine own tears
Do scald like molten lead.

Cor. Sir, do you know me?

Lear. You are a spirit, I know: when did you
die?

Cor. Still, still, far wide!

Phy. He's scarce awake: let him alone awhile.

Lear. Where have I been? Where am I?—Fair
daylight?—

I'm mightily abus'd.—I should e'en die with pity,
To see another thus.—I know not what to say.—
I will not swear these are my hands:—let's see;
I feel this pin prick. Would I were assur'd
Of my condition!

Cor. O, look upon me, sir,
And hold your hands in benediction o'er me:—
No, sir, you must not kneel.

Lear. Pray do not mock me:
I am a very foolish, fond, old man,
Fourscore and upward, not an hour more or less;
And, to deal plainly,
I fear I am not in my perfect mind.

Methinks I should know you, and know this man ;
Yet I am doubtful : for I'm mainly ignorant
What place this is : and all the skill I have
Remembers not these garments ; nor I know not
Where I did lodge last night. Do not laugh at me ;
For, as I am a man, I think this lady
To be my child Cordelia.

Cor. And so I am, I am.

Lear. Be your tears wet ? yes, faith. I pray you
weep not :

If you have poison for me, I will drink it.

I know you do not love me ; for your sisters

Have, as I do remember, done me wrong :

You have some cause, they have not.

Cor. No cause, no cause.

Lear. Am I in France ?

Kent. In your own kingdom, sir.

Lear. Do not abuse me.

Phy. Be comforted, good madam : the great rage,
You see, is cur'd in him : desire him to go in.

Cor. Will't please your highness walk ?

Lear. You must bear with me ;

Pray you now, forget and forgive : I'm old and
foolish.



ACT V.

SCENE I.—*The Camp of the British Forces, near Dover.*

EDMUND, REGAN, Officers, Soldiers, and others.

Edmund.

NOW of the duke if his last purpose hold.
He's full of alteration
And self-reproving :—bring his constant
pleasure.

[To an Officer, who goes out.]

Reg.

Now, sweet lord,

You know the goodness I intend upon you :
Tell me,—but truly,—but then speak the truth,
Do you not love my sister ?

Edm. No, by mine honour, madam.

Reg. I never shall endure her : dear my lord,
Be not familiar with her.

Edm.

Fear me not :—

She and the duke her husband !

[Trumpet.]

Enter, ALBANY, GONERIL, and Soldiers.

Gon. [Aside.] I had rather lose the battle than
that sister
Should loosen him and me.

Alb. Our very loving sister, well be-met.—
Sir, this I hear,—the king is come to his daughter,
With others whom the rigour of our state
Forc'd to cry out. Where I could not be honest,

I never yet was valiant : for this business,
It toucheth us, as France invades our land.

Gon. Combine together 'gainst the enemy ;
For these domestic and particular broils
Are not the question here.

Alb. Let us, then, determine
With the consent of all on our proceeding.

Edm. I shall attend you presently at your tent.

Reg. Sister, you'll go with us ?

Gon. No.

Reg. 'Tis most convenient ; pray you, go with us.

Gon. [*Aside.*] O, ho, I know the riddle.—I will
go.

As they are going out, enter EDGAR disguised.

Edg. If e'er your grace had speech with man so
poor,
Hear me one word.

Alb. I'll overtake you.—Speak.

[*Exeunt all except ALBANY and EDGAR.*]

Edg. Before you fight the battle, ope this letter.
If you have victory, let the trumpet sound
For him that brought it : wretched though I seem,
I can produce a champion that will prove
What is avouchèd there. Fortune love you !

Alb. Stay till I've read the letter.

Edg. I was forbid it.
When time shall serve, let but the herald cry,
And I'll appear again.

[*Exit EDGAR.*]

Re-enter EDMUND.

Edm. The enemy's in view ; draw up your powers.
Here is the guess of their true strength and forces
By diligent discovery ;—but your haste
Is now urg'd on you.

Alb. We will greet the time. [*Exit.*]

Edm. To both these sisters have I sworn my love :
 Each jealous of the other, as the stung
 Are of the adder. Which of them shall I take ?
 Both ? one ? or neither ? To take the widow
 Exasperates, makes mad her sister Goneril ;
 And hardly shall I carry out my side,
 Her husband being alive. Now, then, we'll use
 His countenance for the battle ; which being done,
 Let her who would be rid of him devise
 His speedy taking off. As for the mercy
 Which he intends to Lear and to Cordelia,—
 The battle done, and they within our power,
 Shall never see his pardon ; for my state
 Stands on me to defend, not to debate. [*Exit.*]

SCENE 2.—*The Same.*

*Enter, in conquest, EDMUND ; LEAR and CORDELIA
 prisoners ; Officers, Soldiers, &c.*

Edmund.

OME officers take them away : good guard,
 Until their greater pleasures first be known
 That are to censure them.

Cor. We are not the first
 Who, with best meaning, have incurr'd the worst.
 For thee, oppress'd king, am I cast down ;
 Myself could else out-frown false fortune's frown.—
 Shall we not see these daughters and these sisters ?

Lear. No, no, no, no ! Come, let's away to
 prison :

We two alone, will sing like birds i' the cage :
 When thou dost ask me blessing, I'll kneel down,
 And ask of thee forgiveness : so we'll live,
 And pray, and sing, and tell old tales, and laugh ;
 And take upon's the mystery of things,
 As if we were God's spies.

Edm. Take them away.

Lear. Upon such sacrifices, my Cordelia,
The God's themselves throw incense. Have I caught
thee ?

He that parts us shall bring a brand from heaven,
And fire us hence, like foxes. Wipe thine eyes ;
Ere they shall make us weep, w'e'll see 'em starve.
Come. [*Exeunt LEAR and CORDELIA, guarded.*]

Edm. Come hither, captain ; hark.
Take thou this note [*giving a warrant*] ; go follow them
to prison :

One step I have advanc'd thee ; if thou dost
As this instructs thee, thou dost make thy way
To noble fortunes : either say thou'lt do't,
Or thrive by other means.

Off. I'll do't my lord.

Edm. About it ; and write happy when thou'st
done. [*Exit Officer.*]

Flourish. Enter ALBANY, GONERIL, REGAN, Officers,
and Attendants.

Alb. Sir, you have shown to-day your valiant
strain,
And fortune led you well : you have the captives
Who were the opposites of this day's strife :
We do require them of you, so to use them
As we shall find their merits and our safety
May equally determine.

Edm. Sir, I thought it fit
To send the old and miserable king
To some retention. With him I sent the queen ;
My reason all the same ; and they are ready
To-morrow, or at farther space, t'appear
Where you may hold your session.

Alb. Sir, by your patience,
I hold you but a subject of this war,
Not as a brother.

Reg. That's as we list to grace him.

[*To Edmund*] Witness the world, that I create thee
here

My lord and master.

Gon. Mean you to possess him ?

Alb. The let-alone lies not in your good will.

Edm. Nor in thine, Lord,

Alb. Half-blooded fellow, yes.

Reg. Let the drum strike, and prove my title
thine. [*To EDMUND*]

Alb. Edmund, I arrest thee.

On capital treason ; and, in thy arrest,

This gilded serpent. [*Pointing to GONERIL.*]

Thou art arm'd, Gloster.—Let the trumpet sound :

If none appear to prove upon thy person

Thy heinous, manifest, and many treasons,

I'll prove it on thy heart.

Reg. Sick, O, sick !

Gon. [*Aside.*] If not, I'll ne'er trust poison.

Edm. What in the world he is

That names me traitor, villain-like he lies.

Call by thy trumpet : he that dares approach,

On him, on you, I will maintain my truth

And honour firmly.

Reg. My sickness grows upon me.

Alb. Convey her to my tent.

[*REGAN is led out.*]

Enter a Herald.

Come hither, herald,—let the trumpet sound,

And read out this.

Her. Sound, trumpet ! [*Trumpet sounds. Reads.*]

“ If any man of quality or degree within the lists of
the army will maintain upon Edmund, supposed
Earl of Gloster, that he is a manifold traitor, let him

appear by the third sound of the trumpet : he's bold
in his defence."

Edm. Sound !

[*First trumpet.*

Her. Again !

[*Second trumpet.*

Her. Again !

[*Third trumpet.*

[*Trumpet answers within.*

Enter EDGAR, armed, and preceded by a trumpet.

Her. What are you ?

Your name, your quality ? and why you answer
This present summons ?

Edg. Know, my name is lost ;

By treason's tooth bare-gnawn, and canker-bit :

Yet am I noble as the adversary

I come to cope.

Alb.

Which is that adversary ?

Edg. What's he that speaks for Edmund Earl of
Gloster ?

Edm. Himself :—what say'st thou to him ?

Edg.

Draw thy sword,

That, if my speech offend a noble heart,

Thy arm may do thee justice. Thou art a traitor ;

False to thy gods, thy brother, and thy father ;

Conspirant 'gainst this high illustrious prince ;

And, from th' extremest upward of thy head

To the descent and dust below thy foot,

A most toad-spotted traitor.

Edm. Back do I toss these treasons to thy head ;

With the hell-hated lie o'erwhelm thy heart ;

Which,—for they yet glance by, and scarcely
bruise,—

This sword of mine shall give them instant way,

Where they shall rest for ever.—Trumpets, speak !

[*Alarums. They fight. EDMUND falls.*

Gon. O, save him, save him !

Alb. Hold, sir !
Thou worse than any name, read thine own evil :—
[*Gives the letter to EDMUND.*

No tearing, lady ; I perceive you know it.

Gon. Say, if I do,—the laws are mine not thine.
[*Exit.*

Alb. Go after her ; she's desperate : govern her.
[*Exeunt Officers.*

Edm. What you have charg'd me with, that have
I done ;
And more, much more ; the time will bring it out.
The wheel is come full circle ; I am here.

Enter a Gentleman.

Gent. Help, help ! she's dead !
Your lady, sir, your lady ; and her sister
By her is poison'd ; she hath confess'd it.

Edm. I was contracted to them both ! all three
Now marry in an instant.—Quickly send—
Be brief in it—to the castle ; for my writ
Is on the life of Lear and on Cordelia.

Edg. Send thy token of reprieve.

Edm. Well thought on : take my sword ;
Give it the captain.

Alb. Haste thee, for thy life. [Exit EDGAR.

Edm. He hath commission from thy wife and me
To hang Cordelia in the prison, and
To lay the blame upon her own despair,
That she fordid herself.

Alb. The gods defend her !—Bear him hence
awhile. [EDMUND is borne off.

*Re-enter LEAR, with CORDELIA dead in his arms ;
EDGAR, KENT, and others following.*

Lear. Howl, howl, howl, howl !—O, you are men
of stone :

Had I your tongues and eyes, I'd use them so
That heaven's vault should crack.—She's gone for
ever!

I know when one is dead, and when one lives;
She's dead as earth.—Lend me a looking-glass;
If that her breath will mist or stain the stone,
Why, then she lives.

Kent. Is this the promis'd end?

Edg. Or image of that horror?

Alb. Fall, and cease!

Lear. This feather stirs; she lives! if it be so,
It is a chance which does redeem all sorrows
That ever I have felt.

Kent. O my good master!

Lear. Cordelia, Cordelia! stay a little. Ha!
What is't thou say'st?—Her voice was ever soft,
Gentle, and low,—an excellent thing in woman.—
I kill'd the slave that was a-hanging thee.

Kent. 'Tis true, my lords, he did.

Lear. Did I not, fellow?

I've seen the day, with my good biting falchion
I would have made them skip: I am old now,
And these same crosses spoil me.—Who are you?
Mine eyes are not of the best:—I'll tell you straight.
This' a dull light. Are you not Kent?

Kent. The same,

Your servant Kent.

Lear. You are welcome hither.

Kent. Nor no man else: all's cheerless, dark, and
deadly.

Your eldest daughters have fordone themselves,
And desperately are dead.

Lear. Ay, so I think.

Alb. He knows not what he says: and vain it is
That we present us to him.

Edg. Very bootless.

Alb. O see, see!

Lear. And my poor fool is hang'd! No, no! No life!

Thou'lt come no more,

Never, never, never, never, never!—

Pray you, undo this button:—thank you, sir.—

Do you see this? Look on her,—look,—her lips,—

Look there, look there!— [Dies.

Edg. He faints! Look up, my lord.

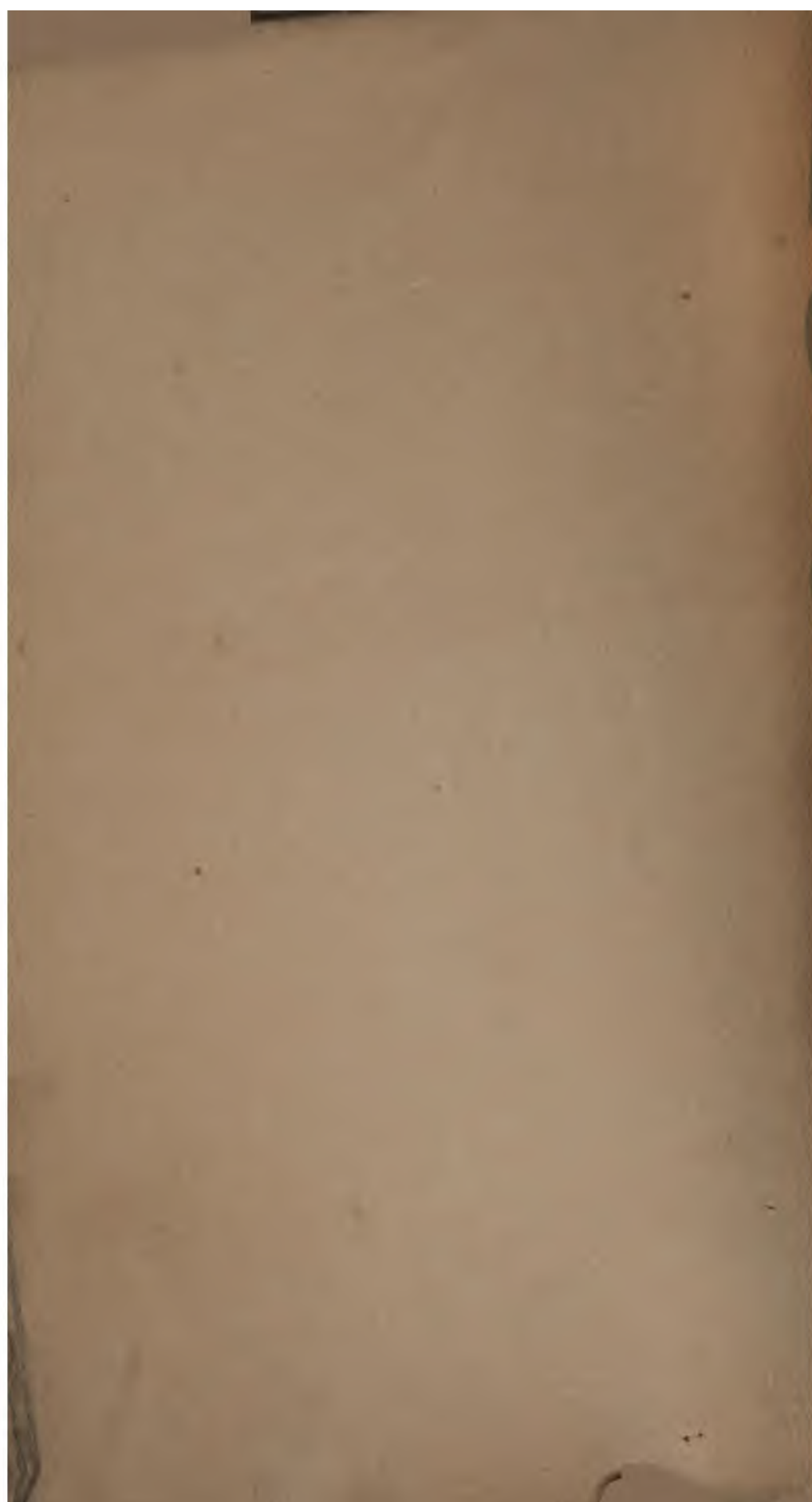
Kent. Vex not his ghost: O, let him pass! he hates him,

That would upon the rack of this tough world

Stretch him out longer.

CURTAIN.











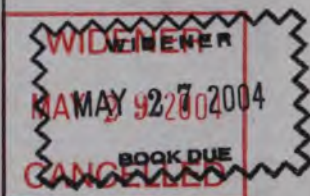


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